

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

and *popolo minuto*, threatened the administration; while, in the contado, the Salimbeni were almost independent of the Republic, made their own alliances, and not unfrequently were united with the enemies of their fatherland.

The once mighty Republic of Pisa had sunk to a secondary position among the powers of Tuscany. To its destinies during the fourteenth century were united those of its neighbour, Lucca, which had been subjected to Pisan rule in 1342. Pisa was divided by the factions of the Bergolini and Raspanti; the latter being expelled, the family of the Gambacorti swayed the Republic. Andrea di Gherardo Gambacorti held the chief authority until his death in 1351, when he was succeeded by his nephews, Francesco and Lotto. We shall find Andrea's son, Piero, among the friends and correspondents of Catherine. The rule of the Gambacorti was just, pacific, and beneficent—they were men of upright life and loyal to the Republic.

With these four communes, Florence, Siena, Pisa, and Lucca, Catherine was to be closely connected. The remaining Tuscan republic, that of Arezzo, hardly touched her life at all. It had already been subject to Florence from 1336 until 1343, and the days of its independence were numbered.

To the south and east of Tuscany lay what were nominally the Papal States, in which, however, the always vague authority of the Church had sunk to a minimum. Of the cities included in them, some, such as Perugia, governed themselves as virtually independent republics; others, such as Rimini and Forli, were in the hands of despots like the Malatesta and Ordelaffi, who ruled them either under the title of papal vicars or with no title but that conferred by the power of the sword and mercenary troops. The state of the Eternal City itself was peculiar, and was destined to affect all Christendom in the great struggle with which Catherine's closing days are associated.

Overshadowed by the Popes and Emperors, the Roman Republic had still existed throughout the centuries, always in name and at intervals in fact, when, in Giovanni Villani's telling phrase, *e Romani si kvarono a romore e feciono popolo*—^c the